

NOTE: The President's 116th news conference began at 11:19 a.m. in the auditorium at the Jerusalem Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Saud al-Faysal bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Likud Party Leader Binyamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem
March 14, 1996

Q. Mr. President, if Mr. Netanyahu comes into power, will you cooperate with him as deeply as you cooperate with Prime Minister Peres?

The President. I will certainly cooperate with him. Israel is a democracy; the Israeli voters will make their decision in a few weeks, and the United States relationship with Israel is deep, strong, and enduring. Of course I would.

And I don't think there is much partisan difference in our country or yours on this question of fighting against terrorism. It's one of the great challenges the world faces. We've got to do a better job. We've got to strengthen it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:10 p.m. in the presidential suite at the Laromme Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Question-and-Answer Session With Students in Tel Aviv, Israel

March 14, 1996

The President. Thank you, Liad, for your introduction and for your fine remarks. She did a good job representing the young people of Israel, didn't she? You did a great job. Thank you. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your welcome and your vigorous and important statement. My friend, Prime Minister Peres, thank you for your many wonderful words. I hope that in our common pursuit of peace I can be worthy of them.

I want to thank all of you for making me feel so welcome here today, and I would like to say a special word of thanks to the people who provided the wonderful music, the Sheba Choir, the Moran Choir, the Tel Aviv-

Yaffa Youth Orchestra, Danny Robas; thank you all very much.

You have made me feel very welcome here today, in this time of pain and sorrow, also a time of challenge for all of Israel, and especially for the young people of this great nation. Only a few blocks from this hall, only days ago, 13 Israelis were murdered as they went about their daily business; the latest victims of the latest campaign of terror. Four bombs in 9 days in Jerusalem, Ashkelon, Tel Aviv—dozens murdered, scores wounded. Your neighbors, your friends, your classmates.

Here every death is a death in the family. But let me say to the mothers and fathers, the brothers and sisters, the grandparents and children, the friends of those who have died, we know your pain is unimaginable and to some extent unshareable, but America grieves with you and prays that you will be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem. Indeed, America lost its own children in these attacks. Three weeks ago in Jerusalem, Sara Duker and Matthew Eisenfeld; before them, Joan Devenny and Alyssa Flatow and Nachshon Wachsmann, a young American who was also a soldier and whose grave, along with those of soldiers of the IDF killed in recent bombings I recently visited, just a few hours ago in Har Herzl. I'm glad there are many American students here today because we must stand together, and you must stand together.

America knows also the wounds of terror because of experience on our own soil, in the tragedies of Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center in New York. One of terrorists' greatest consequences is the awful persistence of fear, fear that the bus is not safe, that a shopping center might be a target, that there is no haven from danger, that friends or family will be taken in an instant, that the fear itself will never end. But fear must be conquered, security must be restored, and peace must be pursued.

I wanted to have this opportunity to speak with you, the young people of this country, because it is vital that you believe that fear can and will be defeated, for you are the future and your response to these cowardly acts will shape your nation's future.

I spend a lot of time at home going around America telling the young people of my country that they and this whole generation of young people all across the world are growing up in the age of greatest possibility even known; a time when more people will be able to fill out their dreams in life than ever before; a time when the information and technology revolution is literally bringing things to the doorstep and the fingertips of young people that only a couple of years ago were unimaginable. Indeed, this is the greatest period of change in economics in society in at least 100 years, since the Industrial Revolution. And our country's great computer magnate, Bill Gates, says that the digital chip is bringing about the greatest revolution in world communications in 500 years, since Gutenberg printed the first Bible in Europe.

If that is true, it seems especially painful that a country like Israel, full of people with such great intellect and energy, with such a great devotion to learning and hard work and to exploring all of life's possibilities, should still be in the grip of such ancient hatred. It must seem to you an enormous burden and at least a great paradox. But I am afraid it is part of human nature.

It seems that there is always some war going on in the history of humankind between hope and fear, and that within each of us there is some balance scale of hope and fear that is rooted in human nature. And each of us has to decide whether we will live for our dream, whether we will define our lives in terms of what we are and what we wish to become, or whether we will live by our fears and our hatred, defining ourselves by what we are not and what we are against.

Those who still pursue the terror here, in the face of unbelievable opportunities for learning, for prosperity, for growth, for living in harmony, for enriching their lives by living with people who are other than they are, they are in the grip of that ancient fear that life can only be lived if you're looking down on someone else, if you're hating someone else, if you're grateful just for the fact that you're not like someone else. It is the great challenge of your generation to overcome those fears in perhaps the hardest place in the world to do it. For you can live out your dreams only if you can convince others to

lay down their fear and define themselves in terms of what they can become, not who they can hate.

We are determined to stand with you in that effort. We knew that overcoming adversity is the genius of the Jewish people and the history of the state of Israel. No nation on Earth knows better that the path of triumph often passes through tragedy. No people know better through millennia of exile and persecution, inquisition, and pogrom, the ultimate evil of the Holocaust, that you must deny victory to oppressors; that you must flourish—indeed flourish, not just endure—against all the odds.

And Israel is proof of your extraordinary resilience. Here in modern times, an ancient people have performed a miracle, forged a great and prosperous democracy, caused the desert to bloom, and given rise to great cities. Tel Aviv, a hill of spring and rebirth, a vibrant culture and thriving business, has grown up where not so very long ago there was only a hill of sand.

Against overwhelming danger and war, through the ordeal of isolation, for more than four decades of bloody struggle, Israel has not only persisted, Israel has flourished. Your achievements in the face of this adversity have inspired free men and women the world over. We all draw strength from your example, and you teach us anew the power of the human spirit to build realities out of dreams.

At this time of year we are reminded especially of the resilience of the Jewish people, for in only a few weeks it will be Passover, time for retelling the story of the Exodus, the story of the struggle for freedom, the story that has inspired the world for so many centuries. And at Seder Jews everywhere will say the words that have been repeated every year for ages, "In every generation someone rises up to destroy us." Well, the Jewish people have overcome every one of these would-be destroyers and denied them their goal, and reaffirmed that what is good in human nature can prevail.

Perhaps there will always be someone, some group, some nation that seeks to destroy Israel. Even if peace is made here in the Middle East, there will always be those who seek to take advantage of others, who seek to deny others their rightful place in

human destiny, who even seek to deny the realities of human nature and the humanity we all share. It is not in our power to rid the world of evil. But today it is within our power to fight on for peace that will give your generation the age of possibility you so richly deserve.

More nations than ever before have risen up with Israel to defeat the destroyers, those who would kill and maim, those who explode human bombs on buses and on busy streets, those who seek to destroy the peace by violence. And here more people are willing to come and share your faith, for along with the Israelis who died in these last round of bombings there were also Palestinians and Americans and others.

The lesson of the meeting we held yesterday in Sharm al-Sheikh was that Israel is not alone. It was an unprecedented event in the history of this region. At the urging of Israel's neighbors—Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians, and the United States—29 leaders, 13 of them from Arab states, came to demonstrate their support for peace and their opposition to the terrorism that is bent on wrecking peace. It was the largest such meeting ever. We there rededicated ourselves to the battle against extremism. We began to work closely together to root out those responsible for the bloodshed.

A meeting like this would literally have been unthinkable just a few years ago. For the first time Arab nations recognized and said publicly that pain in Israel is a danger to them as well. They understand that the destruction of hopes and dreams and innocent life in Israel is a threat to the future they want for themselves and their children. And that is a cause for hope in itself.

Today large majorities of Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians are saying that they wish to raise their children in peace. They want to go about their work to build a better life. They too have had enough of war and enough of tears, as Prime Minister Rabin said. They have understood that for all peoples in the region security does not lie just at the end of the road to peace; there must be security every step of the way or there will be no peace. Peace and security are indivisible.

Twenty-nine years ago, when the Straits of Turan were closed, Sharm al-Sheikh stood

as the symbol of Israel's isolation from the world. But in 1996 Sharm al-Sheikh has become a symbol of Israel's acceptance in this region and in the world.

The division today in the Middle East is not between Arab and Jew. It is between those who are reaching for a better tomorrow and those who have retreated into the pointless, bloody hostility of yesterday. We must be clear: Those who are reaching for the future will prevail.

The bombings of recent days have been the act of desperate men who see that peace is coming closer, that support for peace is growing in the West Bank and Gaza and throughout nations of the region. They know that stirring these old embers of hatred is their only chance to burn down all that has been built. We must not let them succeed in continuing their violence or in breaking our will for peace.

Just a few months ago I was here in Israel on another journey of great sorrow, to mourn the death of my friend Prime Minister Rabin. Just as the bullet that struck him down renewed our determination to press ahead then, if he were here standing with his partner Shimon Peres he would say we must have these tragedies move us forward with even greater conviction.

I know Israel will not lose resolve for peace. Just before coming here, I visited in Jerusalem the Bet-Haruch where a number of students had lost their lives in the recent bombings. I talked to their fellow classmates, and I was amazed at the resilience and the determination of these young people to press ahead for a better future. And then on the road to Tel Aviv, I called two young men, Tal Loel and Uri Tal, who were badly injured in the Tel Aviv bombing. And they wrote me from their hospital beds a marvelous letter in which they said, and I quote, "Peace is the only true solution for this area." I salute those young men for not losing hope even while they are dealing with their own injuries in the hospital. Their extraordinary spirit is the spirit of Israel.

Yesterday, in Sharm al-Sheikh, nations from this region and around the world strengthened their resolve to defeat those who would destroy peace. Today Prime Minister Peres and I, along with our top security

advisers, set a course to deepen our own cooperation and intensify our war on terror. We agreed to increase intelligence sharing, to develop new methods to combat terror, to enhance coordination between our nations and others who have agreed to join us to fight against terror. I committed \$100 million to this effort, and last night I sent a message to the Congress asking them to take urgent action to fulfill our first installment in this endeavor.

America stands with you in the pursuit of peace and in the war on terror. And we will do more. In the days of the Bible, the foreign prophet Balaam looked upon the children of Israel and called them "a people that shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned upon the nation." Today, looking at all this nation has achieved, the acceptance it has won in the Middle East and around the world, we know his words were and are and will be wrong.

Israel is not alone. America stands with you, and with every passing day so do more people here and abroad. But we will not rest until, in the words of the psalm, "There is peace within Israel's walls and security in her towers." And we know that Israel will never give her enemies the victory they seek, never abandon the hope of peace, never lose *hatikvah leshalom*.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any advice for young people that want to become leaders? What should young people do in order to grow up and become leaders?

The President. I believe it is important to do at least three things. One, follow the advice of the Prime Minister. That is, it really matters that you develop your mind, that you develop the capacity to learn for a lifetime. The world in which I live and govern is changing very rapidly. The world in which your generation will live and govern will change even more rapidly. So it is important that you make the most of your school years. It doesn't matter so much what you learn, but that you learn how to learn and that your mind will work for a lifetime to take in new changes and to grasp the ability to understand what is going on, first.

Second, I think it is important to develop a genuine interest in people, and especially

people who are different from you, not just in terms of religion or ethnic group, but I mean people who are genuinely different. People who maybe don't have as much money or have different ways of living or making a living. Because it is impossible to govern effectively in a free society unless you can understand the experiences, the attitude, the challenges other people face.

And then the third thing I would say is it is important to figure out what you believe, and when you do, throw yourselves into election campaigns. [Laughter] Support people who believe as you do. Even if you can't vote, stand up for them, talk to them, provoke arguments and discussions and learn to stand up for what you believe in. But if you have a good mind, if you care about what happens to other people and you can understand them, and you're willing to fight for what you believe in, then you have an excellent chance of success.

Q. How do you see the future of the—in your following the Middle East, its ups and downs?

The President. Well, I think first of all, I believe that it is highly likely that sooner or later in the relatively near-term—that is, sometime in the next few years, if not this year, sometime fairly soon—that Israel will make peace with her neighbors on terms that will guarantee your security and theirs. And then I believe that the region will begin to grow together economically and culturally, and people will begin to work together. That does not necessarily mean that there will be no more violence, because this problem of terrorism and of fanaticism and of extremism is a problem that the world faces. Remember it wasn't so long ago that a religious fanatic walked into a Japanese subway and broke open a small vial of sarin gas and killed many people. It was only a year ago, or 2 years ago, I guess now, that the tragedy in Oklahoma City occurred in America.

So the great problem for the world of the future—and when I was your age, the great problem was the free countries of the world against the communist countries of the world, both sides had nuclear weapons, and we all hoped they would never be used because society could be wiped out. Now the great challenge will be in a world that is in-

creasingly interconnected, where you can literally get on a computer now and have conversations with young people in the United States, or research an academic paper on volcanoes out of libraries in Australia, to do all kinds of things like that, in an open society like that, people are vulnerable to the organized forces of destruction, to organized crime, to drug gangs, to terrorists, to people who would develop biological and chemical and other dangerous weapons.

So for your lifetime, I do believe you'll have to fight these organized forces of destruction. But I believe you will do it within a framework in which the nations are at peace and are growing together economically and you will be more secure. That's what I believe will happen.

Q. Israel gave priority to education. What is the role of education in America and what are the most important parts of it?

The President. I would say that—first, let me deal with the conditions of education in the United States. I believe we have a system of higher education that is second to none in the world. And our great challenge there is to make sure that all of our young people have the opportunity to go on to get a university education, that they are not prohibited from doing it because of economic problems. So what I have tried to do largely there is just to find new ways for young people either to get scholarships or loans or work their way through universities, so everyone can go, because the income differences between young people in the United States who have a college education and those who don't are breathtaking today in America.

In the earlier years, I would say there are basically two great problems. One is we have a highly decentralized system of education in America where children from the age of let's say 3 or 4 to 17 and 18 until they finish high school, most of them are in public schools that are essentially under the legal control of each of our 50 states and under the operational control of school districts in all those states. So what we have to do is to find a way—and many of our schools are doing a great job and many aren't—and America has always rebelled at doing anything that in anyway undermines the decentralization of education, which is good. But

what we're trying to do is to figure a way now to have high standards that we articulate and that we measure for all students in our large country, but that we don't tell the schools how they have to meet the standards, they decide that; but we have standards, and that in the continuing emphasis on those standards and in rewarding those that are meeting them, we bring up all the schools in their performance. Overall educational performance in America is improving, but improving slowly, and it's too uneven.

And then, the third big problem we have is just an enormous percentage of our children are poor children, about 15 to 16 percent of them, and they're coming from homes where the parents often don't have the resources they need. And we don't have the same tradition in our country that you do, that a lot of other countries do, where, if you will, the community, or what my wife calls the village, works with each family to help each child succeed. And we've got to find a way to do better by our children who come from very poor backgrounds and difficult homes. Those are the three challenges we face and we're working very hard on them.

Now, let me just say one other thing, one other thing. The great opportunity we have is the same opportunity you have. We are trying to hook up every classroom and every library in America to the Internet by the year 2000, every single one. And we want them all basically in a worldwide network so that you can all have your common communications and share information and learn and grow together and hook into all the libraries of the world together. And if that happens, it will effect a revolution for all children without regard to their incomes and it will lift the standards everywhere. So that's the great opportunity we're working on, and I believe we're going to get there. I think we'll get there ahead of schedule. I hope we will.

[At this point, a question was asked in Hebrew, and a translation was not provided.]

The President. Well, I intend to do two things. First of all, I intend to set a good example. That is, we are setting a good example. On the next day after we had the conference, I said that in addition to the things

that the Prime Minister has already mentioned, we would commit over \$100 million to working with Israel to fight terror here in the region and working with others who are committed to fighting the terror.

Secondly, we intend to work to make sure the Palestinian Authority has the capacity and fulfills its capacity to do its part in fighting the terror. You cannot do this alone. They have to do their part for the peace to work.

And thirdly, we intend to start immediately meeting with every other country that was there to work out a joint plan for what we can do. And keep in mind, this is not work just for the countries of the Middle East. There are things that the North Americans, the Europeans, and the Asians can do to help to defeat the terrorist networks that wreak their violence here in your back yard. Their reach goes beyond your back yard.

So I did not intend for this to be a cordial meeting in which nothing happens. This—we will give everybody a full opportunity to put their actions where their words were yesterday. I assure you of that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:43 p.m. in the Tel Aviv Center for the Performing Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Liad Modrik, student council representative; Mayor Ronni Milow of Tel Aviv; and singer Danny Robas.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 5¹

The President announced his intention to nominate Aubrey Hooks as Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo.

March 9

In the late morning, the President assisted with the installation of computer cabling at Ygnacio Valley High School in Concord, CA,

¹ This release was not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.

as part of NetDay. In the evening, he traveled to Hillsborough, where he attended a fundraising reception, and then returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the early morning.

March 11

In the morning, the President traveled to Newark, NJ, and then to Wallington, where he toured the Industrial Latex Corp. Superfund site. In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City, and in the late evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President has invited President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey to Washington for a working visit on March 29.

The President announced his intention to nominate David H. Shinn as Ambassador to Ethiopia.

March 12

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt.

The President announced his intention to nominate Susan Bass Levin to the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lonnie R. Bristow as Chair and Shirley Ledbetter Jones and Robert E. Anderson as members of the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

March 13

In the morning, following his arrival in Sharm al-Sheikh, the President met separately with Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in the Presidential suite of the Movenpick Hotel. In the afternoon, the President met separately at the hotel with King Hassan II of Morocco in the King's suite; with Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom in the Presidential suite; and with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority in the Presidential suite. In the evening, the President traveled to Jerusalem, Israel.

The President declared a major disaster in the State of Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, ice